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ABSTRACT

Illiteracy is a social and economic problem in South Carolina. In 1980, 445,202 persons in the state, 25 years of age or older, had less than an elementary school education. In relation to other states, South Carolina is ranked second according to the percentage of the adult population with less than high school completion. Statistics show that persons with low educational levels are much more likely to be involved in crime, to receive public assistance, to live in poverty, and to be unemployed. Illiteracy causes many problems for businesses. Expensive and sometimes dangerous mistakes are made by undereducated workers who cannot read directions or write clearly. The work force must be increasingly knowledgeable to respond to foreign competition. Illiteracy also has a negative effect on the state's economy. Tax revenue is lost because of lower personal income, while criminal justice and welfare costs are high. Funding literacy programs appears an attractive alternative to funding welfare programs. South Carolina is involved in an accountability movement to improve the process of education. Basic skills are tested in schools and can be remedied. In addition, a campaign to identify illiterate adults and provide educational opportunities is underway. Literacy is worth far more than it costs to produce. It is indispensible to the economy, and it is invaluable to the illiterate person. (KC)

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A Consideration of the Social and Economic Costs to Citizens of South Carolina for Adult Illiteracy

1983

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Introduction

Literacy is considered to be a basic human right and a tool for productive citizenship and for fulfilling lives, yet state illiteracy continues at a high rate. (Graff, 1979) Recent statistics reveal that South Carolina's adult population twenty-five years of age and older in 1980 contained 445,202 persons who had less than an elementary school education. (See Table 1) Furthermore, according to Bureau of Census data, twenty-six percent of persons over age twenty-five have completed eight years of education or less. In relation to the remainder of the states in our country, South Carolina is ranked second according to the percentage of the adult population with less than high school completion. Sharply declining SAT scores further disprove the myth that literacy prevails in South Carolina.

One of the most persuasive arguments for a literate state is that an individual cannot fully participate as a worker, citizen, or parent unless he can read at a rather high level. (Carroll and Chall, 1975) Jonathan Kozol, author of Prisoners of Silence and a leading authority on literacy, aptly describes the plight of an illiterate by stating "that the illiterate adult loses almost all opportunity for an articulate denunciation of an unjust allocation of the privileges, the pleasures, and rewards in our society." (Kozol, 1980) Locked into their own subculture, the illiterate live in an information ghetto. Far removed from the flow of popular information that exists in society at large, the information-poor are part of a world which perpetuates an inordinate amount of unawareness and misinformation. (Childers, 1975)

The social as well as the economical costs of illiteracy are staggering. Foregone personal income due to undereducation diminishes state tax revenues. Furthermore, South Carolina spends a vast amount of money to maintain the illiterate who are often among the unemployed, the imprisoned, or welfare recipients.

It is essential that illiteracy in South Carolina is eradicated because a need has arisen for highly knowledgeable workers with the rapid advance of technology. Unless the state promotes an effort to upgrade the basic skills of the illiterate, industry profits will suffer significantly and the ranks of unskilled and unemployed workers will increase.

The need for expansion of educational programs for the South Carolina adult population is apparent. The question is not whether South Carolina can afford programs to eliminate illiteracy but how can we not afford to support these programs.

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I. A Conceptualization of Illiteracy

A. Definitions of Illiteracy

Utilizing the standard of conventional literacy which encompasses the ability to read and write a simple message, less than one percent of the United States population is afflicted by illiteracy. (Bormouth) A person is functioning on a minimal level of literacy when he can read aloud a simple text even though the reading is inaccurate. Usually this level is attained by the third or fourth grade. Yet, educational attainment is not always a valid indicator of reading ability. Some children reach minimal literacy at an earlier stage while others completing four grades in school can barely read and rapidly regress to total illiteracy.

Basic literacy does not provide an individual with the essential skills to effectively function independently in social or economical environments. Literacy means more than the ability to read and write. It must be defined in relation to the demands of the society in which a particular individual must function. The United States Office of Education defines literacy as the "possession by an individual of the essential knowledge and skills which enable him or her to engage in all activities required for effective functioning in his or her group and community." The literacy of people can be measured directly only by testing their ability to comprehend materials that they actually need to read in their day-to-day lives or materials they want to read. (Bormouth)

A distinction should be made between the inability to read and functional literacy. Survival literacy or functional literacy is the ability to use skills and knowledge with the functional competence needed for meeting requirements of adult living. Persons who are functionally illiterate may have some reading skills, yet be unable to read well enough to function effectively in their particular occupation, community, or society. Functional literacy is measured by the Adult Performance Level which encompasses communication, computation, problem solving, and interpersonal relation skills in the areas of government and law, health and safety, occupational knowledge, consumer economics and community resources. (DiPerna, 1982) Persons without at least an eighth grade education are often considered functional illiterates. What literacy level a person is motivated to

achieve is determined by objectives that person has for himself or herself as a family and community member, citizen, consumer, job-holder, and member of social and religious groups. (Hunter and Harmon, 1979)

The skill requirements of a functionally literate person are contingent upon the changes in technology and society. An increase in literacy requirements occurs when a society becomes more technologically advanced no matter the profession or occupation. (DiPerna, 1982) The present trend indicates a future where more people must reach even higher levels of literacy. (Bormouth)

B. Extent of Illiteracy

Since the literacy demands of society have surpassed basic literacy requirements, it is apparent that the United States has a major problem with functional literacy. (DiPerna, 1982) The extent of functional illiteracy is astounding. There are a staggering twenty-three million Americans or one in every five adults that lack the reading and writing abilities needed to handle the minimal demands of daily living. Another thirty million are only marginally capable of being productive workers. Thirteen percent of high school students graduate with reading and writing skills on the sixth grade level. In geographic terms, the average number of illiterate seventeen-year-olds ranges from one out of twenty in affluent suburbs to one out of five in impoverished inner-city areas and in the Southeastern United States. (U.S. News and World Report, Jan. 24, 1977)

C. Levels of Literacy Required to Survive in Social and Economical Environments

Problems of inadequate literacy pervade virtually every segment of life. The level of literacy achieved affects occupational choices of individuals. A recent study revealed that it takes approximately a seventh grade reading level to hold a job as a cook, an eighth grade level to be a mechanic, and a ninth grade level to function as a supply clerk. (Copperman, 1978) Not only does literacy determine vocational choices, but also it determines the written communication that an individual is exposed to daily. It is significant to note that much of the reading material to which our citizenry is exposed is written at levels of difficulty that are far beyond

the comprehension of one who possesses only the minimal level of literacy. Specifically, the reports of fires and scandals that are written for typical daily newspapers and many articles in digest magazines are composed at a degree of vocabulary difficulty and language complexity that is understood by a person who has completed ten years and a half of school. Journalistic accounts and editorials covering the more complex social, political, economical, and technological developments in current events are frequently written at the twelfth grade level or college level. (Carroll and Chall, 1975)

Other practical tasks require functional literacy. A tenth grade level of education is needed to interpret instructions on an aspirin bottle. Furthermore, a person must be functioning on a twelfth grade level to understand an insurance policy. (Wellborn, 1982)

II. Characteristics of the Illiterate Population in South Carolina

Analysis of United States Census data clearly reveals that illiteracy is disproportionately distributed in our society. Illiterates are often concentrated in identifiable populations such as the stationary poor, the imprisoned, older persons, and racial and ethnic minority groups. Illiteracy is much more prevalent among those groups that have been traditionally powerless in this country. There is an overlapping factor among functionally illiterate persons. Poor persons are likely not to have finished high school. Moreover, an inordinate number of the poor and unemployed are among the black and ethnic minorities. Finally, those who are poor and members of racial and ethnic minorities are undereducated. (Hunter and Harman, 1979)

Several characteristics are associated with the illiterate individual. Since a significant portion of illiterates are raised poor and remain poor, the language base, scope of personal experience, and self-concept are affected by the poverty-stricken environment. Illiterate adults tend to be socially isolated, unprepared for work, and plagued with family and personal problems. (Mercer, 1981)

Even though illiteracy affects mainly individuals who are poor or of an ethnic minority group, some functional illiterates are found among middle income white adults. Thus, functional illiteracy cuts across social and economic classes. (DiPerna, 1982)

As far as geographic areas, there are more illiterates located in the South than in the North and more located in the East than the West. More undereducated adults live in urban areas than in rural areas. While sixty-two percent of illiterate adults live in rural areas, thirty-eight percent of illiterate adults live in metropolitan areas. Particularly in rural areas, the number of blacks and other minorities among the uneducated and disadvantaged is disproportionately high. For instance, generally forty-five percent of rural blacks have not completed grade school. In comparison to the population as a whole, rural blacks who have not completed elementary school is thirty percent higher. Furthermore, illiterates find their homes in city ghettos or work on unmechanized farms doing hard physical labor. (Hunter and Harman, 1979)

III. Social Implications of Illiteracy

A. Introduction

Illiteracy has been identified by some writers as a cause of poverty, welfare, crime-infested neighborhoods, unemployment, and numerous other social ills. Of course, illiteracy is not the major cause of those social problems. However, it is a cause which leads to several others. (Kozol, 1980)

B. Crime and Educational Attainment

The cycle of poverty, poor education, and criminal activity is well established. Feelings of inferiority and isolation which beset illiterate individuals often lead them to join delinquent groups where their deficiencies are unknown and where they can gain status. (Dalgish, 1979) With few job skills and low reading levels that prevent them from upgrading what skills they have, these persons divert their energies toward criminal activity to survive. Low educational attainment seems to increase the likelihood of a person turning to illegal means to fulfill his social and economical desires. (Alexander, 1976) The illiterate offender often finds himself returning to the criminal justice system because he is trapped by the poverty and feelings of inadequacy that unemployment and educational difficulties bring to him. (Dalgish, 1979)

Statistics have shown that persons who have been imprisoned have lower levels of educational achievement than the population at large. In the United States prison population, about seventy-five percent of the inmates have not completed high school while thirty-eight percent of the total adult population has not completed high school. Further statistical figures for the United States population reveal that as many as eighty-five percent of youngsters who appear in juvenile court are disabled readers. (Copperman, 1978)

In South Carolina approximately two thousand two hundred eight (2,208) inmates or twenty-two percent of the total number of inmates at all institutions in 1982 had not achieved an educational level above the eighth grade. Therefore, approximately one-fourth of the South Carolina inmate population in 1982 was considered to be functionally illiterate. Additionally, over one half of the inmates have completed nine to eleven grades

of school. Thus, about seventy-five percent of the South Carolina prison population has not completed high school. Table 2 presents the educational attainment levels of inmates in the custody of the South Carolina Department of Corrections. It can be concluded from these figures that a strong correlation exists between low educational attainment and imprisonment in South Carolina.

Even though educational attainment appears to be low among prisoners, it is encouraging to note that education is an effective tool in crime prevention and crime reduction. With an increase in education, crime is reduced mainly because education reduces unemployment and the employed commit fewer crimes. In addition, a decrease in delinquency is a likely result since more education and greater income are related. Some authorities on crime suggest that equalization of education may be an appropriate government goal in crime reduction. (Alexander, 1976)

C. Public Assistance and Educational Attainment

Another indicator that is frequently used to underline the problems faced by those in our society with less than a high school education is their appearance on public welfare rolls. Although numerous reasons can be cited for people joining the welfare rolls, a prime common denominator is the level of schooling attained. (Hunter and Harman, 1979) In comparison to the average person, recipients of welfare usually have lower educational attainment. (Alexander, 1976) Among welfare recipients, the proportion of those who have obtained less than six grades of school is more than double those who have six to eight years of education. An even greater difference of approximately four times exists between persons with less than a sixth grade education and those with nine to eleven years of school. (Hunter and Harman, 1979)

A series of studies conducted by the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare revealed that incapacitated and unemployed Aid to Families with Dependent Children fathers have median levels of education far below the average. Another study by Lillian Dean Webb in 1975 showed that eighty-four percent of all unemployed fathers who were receiving

Aid to Families with Dependent Children had less than a high school education and that eighty-two percent of Aid to Families with Dependent Children mothers have not completed high school. (Alexander, 1976) However, the applicability of these studies is limited by the fact that South Carolina does not have a welfare program for able-bodied fathers of AFDC children.

In the article "The Literacy of Welfare Clients," Marc Bendick and Mario Cantu report the findings of a study conducted in public assistance agencies in the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, Atlanta, San Antonio, and Cambridge, Massachusetts which indicated that the lower the average educational levels of Aid to Families with Dependent Children clients, the lower is the index of accessibility to Aid to Families with Dependent Children. To receive public assistance, recipients in the surveyed agencies had to possess the necessary literacy skills to complete forms, provide documentary proof of eligibility, comprehend explanatory brochures, and comply with written notices. There was a mismatch between welfare clients' abilities to read and public welfare agencies' demands for client literacy. Therefore, Bendick and Cantu concluded that the literacy-skill gap prevents disproportionate numbers of lowest-educated persons who are among the populace with the lowest income from receiving benefits. Furthermore, they state that in public welfare agencies, higher benefits accrue not to the most needy clients, but to the most adept who are often the least needy. (Bendick and Cantu, 1978)

It has been suggested that education has a strong welfare reducing effect. Because welfare eligibility is based on income and income is a function of educational levels, increased education will decrease the number of persons applying for benefits. A number of studies have pointed to a 26 to 50% correlation between education and the number of persons applying for welfare benefits. (Trevor and Campbell, 1982)

D. Poverty and Educational Attainment

Literacy can be directly linked to poverty. This relationship is substantiated in South Carolina by the 1970 Census data which reveals that 120,085 South Carolina families have incomes below the poverty level. Thus, 19.1% of 628,689 South Carolina families have incomes below poverty level. The head-of-the-households of these families were identified as having 7.1 years of school which indicates that they are functional illiterates.

Additional details are given for races of poverty-level families in South Carolina with the percentages each represents of the total population of South Carolina families in Table 3.

The disadvantaged are devoid of conventional knowledge possessed by the mainstream of society which is utilized in bargaining for a house or budgeting. An ignorance of basic consumer concepts such as comparison shopping, unit pricing, costs of housing, and home financing further lessens the changes of sound business decision-making and further increases the gullibility of the illiterate person. The disadvantaged adult suffers from insufficient job information and, thus, his efforts of securing a job are hindered. It is most likely that the poor individual will be unemployed, on the welfare rolls, and deficient in skills which could make him or her employable. (Mercier, 1981) In sum, low economic status is a result of information poverty.

E. Unemployment and Educational Attainment

Another interacting factor with illiteracy is unemployment. The less educated are victims of a greater amount of unemployment. Job keepers have almost a year and a half more education than job losers. Persons who have not mastered basic skills are the last to be hired and the first to be fired. They are at a constant disadvantage in the job market, especially in economic hard times. (Wellborn, 1982) It is less difficult for the functionally literate person to secure a job, maintain it, and advance in it. In fact, the functional literate usually earns more than the functional illiterate. (DiPerna, 1982)

The marketplace favors the more educated. Companies have found that greater productivity can be gained by investing in more-educated employees. To some employers more education reflects a greater capacity and motivation for training. Therefore, employer investment in the worker appears to increase in about the same proportion as the worker's self investment in schooling. Furthermore, financial potential of a company is improved by more educated employees. Also contributing to the relationship between education and employment is the employer's need for specialized knowledge. Persons with higher educational levels generally benefit from specificity of job training and knowledge. Advanced technology causes the less-educated

labor force to be more susceptible to layoffs. In sum, education, income, and employability are positively related and interdependent. (Alexander, 1976) National statistics of unemployment rates of high school graduates and high school dropouts from 1967 to 1977 presented in Table 4 substantiate these relationships. It appears that the unemployment rate for high school dropouts is nearly double that of high school graduates.

IV. Implications for the Business Sector Because of Illiteracy

An illiteracy crisis is prevalent in business and industry. With the advent of automation, space technology, atomic energy and other technological breakthroughs, the nature of work has changed dramatically and new demands have been placed on workers. Jobs traditionally held by illiterates have been replaced by more technical and complex positions. (Mercier, 1981) The shortage of literate workers is particularly predominant in banking, telecommunications, and data processing where there is a demand for a large workforce which is competent in reading skills. Unless some measures are taken to decrease literacy, the gap between available jobs and qualified workers will form an underclass that will be unprepared to survive in a high-technology economy. Hence, social inequities will be augmented. (McGowan, 1982)

There are a host of problems that businesses are confronted with because of the knowledge gap and an insufficient quantity of literate workers. Mistakes caused from poor reading and writing skills such as copying inventory numbers inaccurately or typing business correspondence incorrectly because of poor punctuation and misspelled words are extremely costly to business and industry. Not only are undereducated workers less proficient in carrying out their duties, but also they can be dangerous to themselves and others. For example, an illiterate worker who could not read a warning sign was killed. Also, an assembly-line worker at a manufacturing company nearly killed several workers when a heavy piece of metal that he did not attach properly to a machine flew off because he did not have the ability to read assembly-line instructions. (Hymowitz, 1981)

Illiteracy also poses a problem for international business in the United States. Difficulties in finding employees properly trained in writing or comprehending written sentences and working with computerized data banks may cause the United States not to fare well when competing with other technologically advanced countries. (Wellborn, 1982)

The workforce of the United States must adjust to new technology to remain competitive against Japan and other foreign countries where higher rates of literacy and production exist. Rampant illiteracy will cause low productivity which will lead to higher inflation, more competition, and additional unemployment. (Trevor and Campbell, 1982)

The implications of illiteracy to South Carolina's industry is clear. Unless the high rate of illiteracy is reduced, high technology companies will locate facilities in other localities where the level of education of the workforce matches its technological needs. Thus, the state stands to lose enormous potential revenue in the future from the failure to attract new industry.

Some businesses are responding to worker illiteracy by sponsoring programs to teach employees the basic skills. The number of these programs is small. Many of the remedial efforts are conducted by banks and insurance companies. (Tefft, 1982) Depending on company policies, courses are offered to applicants before they are hired or either are offered after they are hired. (Hymowitz, 1981)

V. A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Maintaining an Illiterate Adult Population

Not only does literacy have a negative effect on social order, but also it has a negative effect on the state's economy. The cost to the State of South Carolina for a high rate of illiteracy is staggering. A loss in tax revenues for state, local, and federal governments results because of lower personal income. When personal income increases because of higher educational levels, tax revenues can increase without raising taxes. (Trevor and Campbell, 1982) If the 445,202 persons in South Carolina who have below an eighth grade education were to attain this level of education, the total personal income for this group would increase by approximately four hundred and ninety (490) million dollars yearly. Furthermore, if these individuals were to complete high school, there would be over a two (2) billion dollar increment in personal income in the state. Using the lowest and highest rates of taxation in South Carolina on personal income as standards, which are 2% and 7% respectively, a range of increase in tax revenues can be estimated to be from 10 million to 34 million dollars for the undereducated in South Carolina who receive an eighth grade education. With the same standards, the estimated tax revenue increase is between 44 to 153 million dollars for illiterate persons who complete high school.

Other economic costs are the enormous fiscal resources expended to provide for the maintenance of the illiterate in such areas as criminal justice and welfare. It is estimated that approximately thirteen and a half (13.5) million dollars is expended for prison costs annually in South Carolina for inmates who have not reached eighth grade educational attainment. Moreover, nearly seven and a half (7.5) million dollars per year is paid out to Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) families with mothers in the home with an eighth grade education or less. (Watson, 1982)

While the costs of illiteracy is burdensome to the state economy, the economical and social benefits of a literate state are myriad. Increased literacy promotes fuller employment, a more equitable distribution of wealth, and better utilization of talents. There is a general consensus among economists that investment in education has a vital effect on economic growth. (Alexander, 1976) The wealth of a state can be expressed in relation to the level of development and the effective utilization of human

energies, skills, and knowledge for useful purposes. The fullest development of the skills of the labor force is best described as the maximization of learning opportunities which are required for realistic participation of members of the labor force in productive activity. With more investment in learning, the capacity of the labor force to be involved in more complex productive activity results. Consequently the level of employment opportunity increases. (Harbison, 1973) Schooling is an attractive investment across all schooling levels and for all race-sex groups. (Hines, Tweeter, and Redfern, 1970) Private rates of return for elementary school is 155.1% and for the secondary level of school it is 19.5%. (Alexander, 1976)

There are also numerous societal benefits of literacy. The development of human capital forms an educated citizenry. Hence, society in general is benefited by a more informed electorate. (Alexander, 1976) A high correlation exists between educational attainment and voter participation. For instance, in South Carolina specifically, seven hundred and twenty-three (723) Adult Education students participated in the electoral process as a result of more education. Among other societal benefits are the promotion of equality of opportunity, income distribution effects of education, and the value of literacy in the transmission of our cultural heritage. The family unit in society also benefits from literacy. Children of illiterate parents who receive basic educational training benefit from more enlightened parents. The educational success of one generation affects the next generation. (Webb, 1980)

Perhaps the most important benefactor of literacy is the individual. Literacy skills open the way for enjoyment of literature and to deeper levels of self-expression. It confers independence in managing one's own affairs. For example, literacy skills enable a person to obtain a driver's license or fill out an income tax form. Additionally, an increase in literacy directly correlates with an increase in personal income. The earning power differential between a person who is a high school graduate and a person who has completed an eighth grade education is estimated to be $128,649 during a lifetime. Even in the same job, persons with a high school education earn more than persons who have not completed high school.

This factor has also been proven in South Carolina. The earning power differential between South Carolina males who completed an eighth grade education in 1969 and men who completed high school in 1969 was $1,278. Comparing the same grade levels for women, the difference of earning potential came to a total of $552. See Table 5 for a presentation of the educational attainment and mean income of males and females over eighteen years of age in South Carolina in 1969.

Not only is there a growth in earning potential, but also there is a growth in the range of job opportunities for the individual. (Webb, 1980) In fact, in South Carolina 1,127 Adult Education participants obtained a better job while 1,634 secured a job. It is also significant to note that 306 of the 5,476 Adult Education students receiving public assistance stopped collecting these benefits.

VI. Educational Initiatives to Eradicate Illiteracy in South Carolina

South Carolina is involved in an accountability movement to improve the process of education. As a part of this endeavor, the South Carolina General Assembly enacted the South Carolina Basic Skills Assessment Act in 1978. Legislators responded to the overwhelming public outcry over reports of the decline in educational standards. Also, the "getting back to the basics craze" which was sweeping across the nation prompted the South Carolina Legislature along with thirty five other state legislatures to pass basic skills legislation. A major thrust for the Basic Skills Assessment Act was the passage of the South Carolina Education Finance Act of 1977. The educational trend established in the South Carolina Education Finance Act, which is to ensure all children in every public school educational opportunities that meet state standards, is being continued with the Basic Skills Assessment Act.

As a result of the South Carolina Basic Skills Assessment Act, new methods of student performance evaluation and instruction have been employed in the public school system to improve fundamental educational skills of public school students through a Basic Skills Assessment Program. An integral part of this effort is the measurement of readiness of first grade students to function in the educational system and a measurement of weaknesses in subject areas of first, second, third, sixth, eighth, and eleventh grade students by tests based on selected educational objectives. Emphasis is placed on instructional improvement and remediation in the basic skills areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. The Basic Skills Assessment Program is designed neither to test minimum competency nor to determine promotions, detentions, or graduation. However, the basic skills tests indicate how well or how poorly an individual student understands the basic concepts he or she is being taught in school. By this process, weaknesses can be targeted and remedied. (South Carolina Department of Education, 1981)

Through the cooperative efforts of the State Department of Education's Office of Adult Education, the South Carolina Literacy Association, local school districts, and local literacy councils, a second initiative, the Adult Reading Campaign, was instigated to eradicate illiteracy. This

campaign is designed to raise the reading level and functional competencies of undereducated adults in all areas of South Carolina by identifying every non-reading adult in the state and offering these non-readers an opportunity to improve their reading skills and general educational level. The ultimate purpose of the Adult Reading Campaign is to teach interested adults how to read so that the cycle of crime, undereducation, and poverty can be broken.

The South Carolina Literacy Association receives support from a broad base of public and private agencies. As far as instruction, the South Carolina Literacy Association and local literacy councils train volunteers to tutor interested adults on a one-to-one basis. Many of the volunteer tutors are members of churches, civic groups, and professional organizations. Referrals of clients are obtained from participants in the program, employers, churches, and human service agencies such as the Department of Social Services.

The reading campaign has made considerable progress in beginning to meet the needs of the undereducated population in South Carolina. More than 10,000 adults have expressed an interest in learning to read since July, 1980. In 1981, 6,044 adults registered for reading tutorials while 3,978 adults were tutored.

VII. Conclusion

An analysis of the costs and benefits of literacy presents two questions: should the state place its priorities on a welfare system for the illiterate adults in South Carolina, or should it place its priorities on a program of education for these individuals. It is apparent that funding literacy programs is an attractive alternative to funding welfare programs. Supporting a person in a literacy or basic skills class for a few years is more economically feasible than supporting a person for a lifetime on a public assistance program. The bottom line is that literacy is worth far more than it costs to produce. It is indispensible to the economy, and it is invaluable to the illiterate individual.

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TABLE 1

Educational Attainment of the South Carolina Adult Population 25 Years of Age and Over

County in South Carolina	Zero to Eight Years of Elementary School	One to Three Years of High School	Four Years of High School
1. Abbeville	4,250	3,235	3,162
2. Aiken	14,806	12,512	17,681
3. Allendale	2,243	1,102	1,323
4. Anderson	23,052	18,498	20,009
5. Bamberg	3,280	2,116	2,123
6. Barnwell	3,318	2,634	2,797
7. Beaufort	5,038	3,865	10,330
8. Berkeley	9,442	8,878	18,121
9. Calhoun	2,056	1,494	1,817
10. Charleston	28,727	24,758	43,779
11. Cherokee	7,991	5,457	5,882
12. Chester	6,015	4,116	4,137
13. Chesterfield	7,889	4,891	5,153
14. Clarendon	5,490	3,123	3,539
15. Colleton	5,181	4,608	4,836
16. Darlington	10,742	7,578	8,821
17. Dillon	6,037	3,700	3,543
18. Dorchester	6,219	4,995	10,821
19. Edgefield	3,169	2,555	2,158
20. Fairfield	4,085	2,398	2,755
21. Florence	15,967	13,598	16,425
22. Georgetown	6,958	4,295	6,132
23. Greenville	37,333	36,228	44,336
24. Greenwood	9,878	7,441	7,968
25. Hampton	3,555	2,184	2,723
26. Horry	12,748	10,943	17,256
27. Jasper	2,542	1,557	2,339
28. Kershaw	6,168	4,617	6,466
29. Lancaster	9,171	7,194	8,711
30. Laurens	11,160	7,127	6,967
31. Lee	3,609	2,277	2,336
32. Lexington	13,214	15,227	23,836
33. McCormick	1,442	1,014	1,011
34. Marion	6,165	4,299	4,842
35. Marlboro	6,473	3,714	3,728
36. Newberry	5,651	4,559	4,384
37. Oconee	9,152	6,376	7,989
38. Orangeburg	12,909	9,351	10,780
39. Pickens	11,852	9,194	10,897
40. Richland	22,867	24,146	36,657
41. Saluda	2,916	2,473	2,464
42. Spartanburg	33,874	26,425	29,389
43. Sumter	11,707	8,939	13,292
44. Union	6,441	4,271	4,453
45. Williamsburg	6,907	4,321	5,268
46. York	15,504	12,809	15,360
South Carolina (all counties)	445,202	357,092	468,796

SOURCE: U.S. Census, 1980, South Carolina Population Characteristics

TABLE 2

Educational Attainment Levels of 9030 Inmates In Custody of the South Carolina Department of Corrections in 1982

	YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED								
Number of Inmates with Corresponding Percentages	0-4	5-7	8	Subtotal 0-8	9-11	12	13-15	16	17-22
	266 (2.9%)	887 (9.8%)	855 (9.5%)	2008 (22.2%)	4723 (52.3%)	1708 (19%)	505 (5.6%)	55 (.6%)	23 (.3%)

9030 = 100%

SOURCE: South Carolina Department of Corrections, Division of Research and Statistics

TABLE 3

Poverty Status of South Carolina Families by Median Years of School Completed, Race, and Percent of All Poverty-Status Families By Race in 1969

All Families 628,689	% Below Poverty By Race	Median School Years Completed
Poverty Families: 120,085	19.1%	7.1
White: 471,761	10.5%	8.7
Black: 155,897	45%	6.1
Spanish-Speaking: 2,104	13.1%	12.4

SOURCE: U.S. Census, 1970, South Carolina Population Characteristics, Table 211, Pages 950-951.

TABLE 4

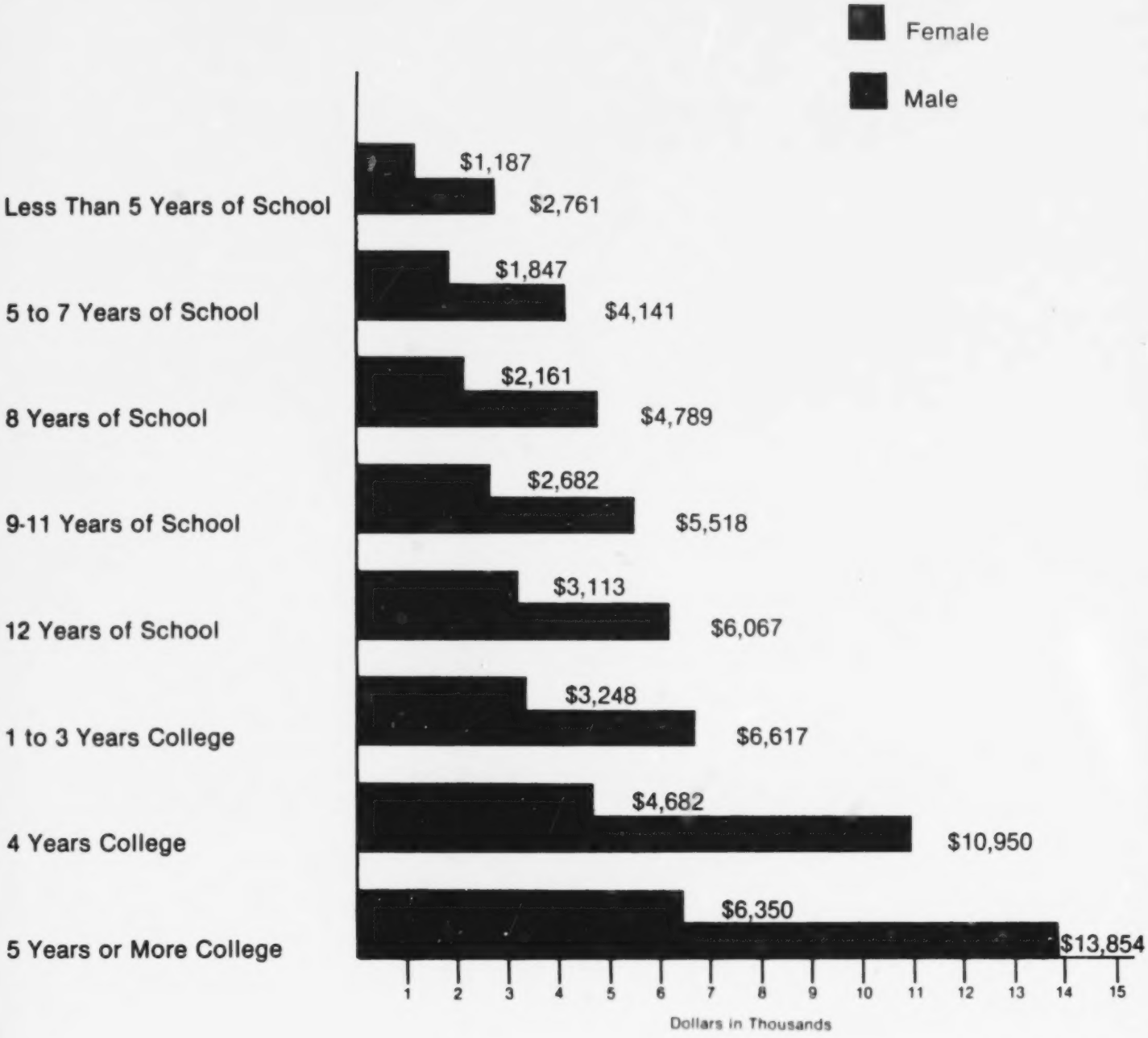
Unemployment Rates of High School Graduates and High School Dropouts, 1967-1977, In the United States

	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
High School Graduates	16.2	13.5	11.4	18.1	17.2	14.7	12.3	17.0	19.9	18.1	15.7
High School Dropouts	24.0	21.2	17.6	27.9	24.3	26.7	23.0	29.8	34.1	30.9	26.6

SOURCE: Handbook of Labor Statistics 1977 - Reference Edition, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin 2000, Table 31, Pages 111-114.

TABLE 5

Educational Attainment and Mean Income of Males and Females Over 18 Years of Age in South Carolina in 1969



SOURCE: U.S. Census, 1970, Detailed Characteristics, Table 197, Page 783.